
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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Syracuse, NY - Democratic State Convention

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At Democratic State Convention, Syracuse, September 30, 1930

Informal Acceptance of Renomination for Governor

It is a novel experience to me to attend a convention in which I appear as one of its nominees. Two years ago my participation in the gathering of our party was limited to a conversation from a distance of over a thousand

miles in the middle of the night with my old and dear friend, Alfred E. Smith. It is known to you that two years ago I hesitated long and earnestly before I could bring myself to the possibility of a return to public service. Yet I can tell you from my heart that I do not and never will regret the decision then made, and today you have my assurance that having set my hand to the plow I will plow the furrow through to its successful end.

In a few days, following an immemorial custom, it will be my privilege formally to acknowledge the honor which you have conferred upon me by making me for the second time the candidate of our party for the high office of Governor. At that time I shall try to make clear not only to the members of my own party but to all the voters of the State my position on those tremendous problems which confront us in these dark hours of "Republican Prosperity". For the moment I can give only a most informal expression of my profound gratitude and of my deep appreciation that what I have done, or tried to do, has so far met with your approval as to warrant your selecting me as your candidate to continue what I have begun.

That you have again placed in the harness with me those two tried and true team mates, Herbert Lehman and Morris Tremaine, is a deep gratification to me and an assurance of your confidence in our Administration. At my earnest solicitation and at great personal sacrifice the Lieutenant Governor has again consented to be your candidate, and I am very happy indeed in the thought that for the next two years he will be at my right hand in every task and at all times, as in the past. Furthermore, in the nomination of Captain John James Bennett for the office of Attorney-General you have chosen a lawyer and fighter of integrity and courage, one who will look upon this great office as an opportunity to serve the people of this State as a whole, regardless of party, regardless of geography and not as one seeking to further his personal political ends. Finally, you the delegates to this Convention have risen above party in giving nomination and not mere endorsement to one of the greatest jurists of our day.

Our brethren of the opposition party have recently selected their standard bearer, and in accepting the honor thus conferred he has expressed his determination to go before the people and to ask them to select him as the head of one of the greatest and most complicated business and social organizations in the whole world, on one promise and on one pledge only, for in his speech of acceptance he distinctly refers to the "issue" and not the "issues" of the campaign. In fact, I must be entitled to assert, if my opponent is correct, that all of the deep problems of our life, the control of public utilities, the relief of rural taxation, old age security against want, the solving of the unemployment problem, cheaper electricity for the people by the exercise of their sovereign rights over their own water power, prison reform, labor laws, the building of hospitals, the bettering of local government, the improvement of dirt roads, the reform of the election laws—all these things I say, for which I have fought for two long years with the unprogressive, short-sighted Republican legislative majority, are no longer matters at issue. I have apparently converted the entire Republican Party to my views. The sole issue to which he limits himself is the most remarkable issue ever advanced for being elected Governor. When I first read this keynote address of my opponent, I was puzzled, in fact, as to whether he was running for Governor of the State of New York or for District Attorney of New York County.

As this it seems is his only issue, let me hasten to assure him that this particular Governor will stand, as he has always stood, for the authority, for the enforcement and for the integrity of the law, with due respect for the fundamental rights of every citizen concerned, irrespective of political faith. I gain and the people of the State gain the distinct impression that the leaders of the Republican Party are seeking for something else to talk about other than the vital problems to which I have referred, something else, for instance, different from the recent attempt by which they hope to make the Grand Old Party of this State an *amphibious ichthyosaurus* equally comfortable whether wet or dry, whether in the sea or on the land or up in the air.

I believe that a constantly growing understanding of State problems by our voters, regardless of party, enables them to realize without any argument from me that the questions to which I have briefly alluded are all vital questions which should be put to every candidate. These problems directly or indirectly affect the individual lives, the employment, the pleasures, the prosperity or poverty of every man and every woman and every boy and every girl on every farm and in every community throughout the length and breadth of the State.

I shall not fail to demand that my opponent state his position on these issues, for, if he has no position, as his speech indicates, he has no right to offer himself for the task of Governor of this great State, a task requiring a thorough knowledge of the State and of its problems. I rest assured that the people of the State will not let these great matters be ignored or suppressed, but will insist with me that they be discussed and answered during the coming campaign.

And now let me ask him a question. It is reported that the price of the support of various Republican leaders who have hitherto proclaimed themselves irrevocably dry is a promise that the Republican organization will pass a State Enforcement Act; further, that you have yesterday again given assurance to Assemblyman Jenks in Binghamton that until the Eighteenth Amendment is repealed you will work for the direct and rigorous enforcement of the Volstead Act in every way. If you become Governor and if a State Enforcement Act is passed, will you sign it or not?

For many years the majority of voters of this State, irrespective of their political allegiance, have decided that a Democratic administration can best carry on our governmental functions and care for the real interests of the State.

This year with the added burden of bankruptcy and failure of the Republican leadership in Washington and in Albany, the people of New York will not be misled by any campaign of muckraking or falsification. They will not find us descending to the gutters with them. In such a campaign I have no doubt of the overwhelming success of the Democratic Party.

We have the will to win! We have the right to win! We will win!